

Iowa Current Developments



April 2011, Iowa Current Developments
USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service
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"Iowa Natural Resources Conservation Service: Excellence in helping people conserve and improve our natural resources, communities and environment."

Helping People Help the Land
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A Message from the: **State Conservationist**



*Rich Sims,
State Conservationist*

Someone Does Notice....

I recently had the opportunity to spend a day and a half with Secretary Vilsack and EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson while they were visiting various farms and agribusiness sites in Iowa. It was encouraging to see them share ideas, talk about voluntary conservation and seek solutions for a win-win scenario for all involved people.

One of the highlights occurred during dinner, when the Secretary was explaining NRCS conservation programs to the Administrator. He shared how Congress has increased funding for NRCS conservation programs--almost four-fold. However staffing levels did not increase enough to keep up with the additional workload.

He then shared his belief that conservation work is about people going to the field to work with each landowner individually, which is increasingly difficult to find time to accomplish.

I wanted to share what I heard so you know he "gets it." He notices how hard we work. He recognizes that each individual employee must do more and more to put the additional conservation programs dollars to work for the American people.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard Sims".



Monty Collins (left) talks to Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Lisa P. Jackson and Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack about the environmental benefits of rotational grazing techniques used with his 30-head cow/calf operation near Pleasantville. Stop arranged by DC Jeff Matthias.

Summer Students: Help Them Feel Welcome

Iowa NRCS has recruited another great group of college students to work in the Hawkeye State this summer. For some, this will be their first visit to the state. Others have been here before.

In either case, please remember to reach out to these students this summer, especially during holidays and weekends by working through their listed supervisor.

Most students will arrive before Memorial Day and will end their summer the first week of August.

Student	Location	Supervisor
Carrington Taylor	Ida Grove	Lorne Miller
Helen Leavenworth	Orange City	Gregory Marek
Amanda McNees	Rock Rapids	Keith Edwards
Nicholas Williams	Spencer	Dean Gronemeyer
Aris Harris	Jefferson	Kevin Kordick
Corey Harris	Waterloo	Shaffer Ridgeway
Elyssa McFarland	Waverly Soils	Ryan Dermody
Robyn Wilson	Clarinda	Kevin McCall
Heidi Dittmer	Corydon	Mark Fehseke
Jaime Sandoval, Jr.	Creston	Paul Goldsmith
Lance Porter	Logan	Lane Collins
Tuan Huynh	Malvern	Brian Gross
Katie Yule	Red Oak	Tom Burkhiser
Elyne Tran	Ottumwa	Lori Altheide
Kelly Mercier	Wapello	Drew DeLang
Jonathan Callaway	Williamsburg Eng	Doug Morningstar

In the Pits: Soil Quality Training in Area 4



Seth Moore, private lands technician in Fremont County; Shane McNaughton, resource conservationist in Mills/Fremont County; Shari Addy, soil conservationist in Shelby County and Marcus Hill, budget analyst in the State Office learn more about soil quality.



State Soil Scientist Mike Sucik provides upclose and personal soil quality training to Financial Management Specialist James Zeigler at an employee field day in Area 4 this month.

Watch Those Pennies: It's Financial Literacy Month

April is officially recognized as National Financial Literacy Month, which means that now might be a good time to think about your Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) savings account. Now is a perfect time for participants to make retirement a priority by planning a financial checkup, re-evaluating financial targets, and updating long-term retirement goals. While it is best to stay with an investment strategy, it is also important to periodically reassess your TSP investments, so you can be sure that you are saving and investing to reach your long-term financial objectives. Attached is the TSP Highlights for the month of April with ideas on how to save.

Saving for retirement sounds daunting, but finding the money might be easier than you think. It's important to remember that even small contribu-

tions can add up to big savings thanks to compound interest.

The table below contains some simple ways to save a few dollars every day – and an idea of how that money can grow over the years. To complete your TSP checkup, visit Planning & Tools: Investment Strategy.

To make changes to your TSP contributions, go to NFC's Employee Personal Page at: <https://www.nfc.usda.gov/personal/eplogin.aspx>

To make changes to your TSP account including how it is allocated, go to TSP's website at: <https://www.tsp.gov>. For questions, contact Human Resources at 515-284-4587.

If Every Day You Saved the Cost of....	You'd Contribute...	In 10 years you'd have...	In 20 years you'd have...	In 30 years you'd have...
5 text messages (\$1)	\$365/year	\$4,997	\$14,089	\$30,631
1 bottled water(\$1.50)	\$547/year	\$7,489	\$21,114	\$45,904
1 lottery ticket (\$2)	\$730/year	\$9,994	\$28,178	\$61,261
1 gourmet coffee (\$3.50)	\$1,277/year	\$17,483	\$49,292	\$107,164
1 dry-cleaned shirt (\$4)	\$1,460/year	\$19,989	\$56,356	\$122,522
1 short taxi ride (\$5)	\$1,825/year	\$24,986	\$70,444	\$153,152
1 take-out lunch (\$7)	\$2,555/year	\$34,980	\$98,622	\$214,413

Rainwater Harvesting: Speaker at your Service

James Grizzard, Earth Team Volunteer/Consultant with Johnson County Soil & Water Conservation District and Rainscaping Iowa, is available for presentations on rainwater harvesting systems, their installation and the cost and savings these systems provide.

After traveling to Ecuador for an archeological dig, he was inspired by the rainwater harvesting done by the indigenous people. Upon his return to his home in Texas, he worked for Innovative Water Solutions, a full-service water conservation system design build company that specializes in water demand and supply

management in residential and commercial projects, creating rainwater harvesting, gray water reuse, and irrigation systems as well as drainage improvements and landscape solutions.

James is originally from Cedar Rapids and recently moved back from Texas as his wife is finishing up school at the University of Iowa. Contact the Johnson County SWCD (319-337-2322, ext. 3) to inquire about Grizzard's availability to speak at your meeting.

Conservation Clause: Leasing Resources for Absentee Landowners

A two-year study of sustainable agriculture and land tenure in Iowa has analyzed legal questions relating to Iowa farmland ownership and the transfer of land to a new generation of owners, many of whom will rent or lease farmland to others.

The Sustainable Agricultural Land Stewardship (SALT) project involved researching farm lease agreements and compiling resources for landowners about how farm leases can be used to encourage soil conservation. These resources are available at **SustainableFarmLease.org**, a new website created as part of the project.

Issues addressed through the website range from using lease contracts to increase tenure security and soil conservation to assisting new farmers and integrating livestock into crop operations.

The website also includes a 56-page "Landowner's Guide," which can be printed and distributed to those with limited or no Internet access.

Current trends, revealed by research at ISU's Agricultural Extension, point toward increased tenancy and lease agreements with less stable tenure and decreased landlord involvement:

- More than half the farmland in Iowa is rented, and the *areas of the state containing the most fertile agricultural land have tenancy rates ranging between 61 percent and 70 percent* [Source: Rented Land in Iowa: Social and Environmental Dimensions].
- Fifty-five percent of Iowa's farmland is owned by people over the age of 65, and 28 percent of the land is owned by individuals over 75 [Source: Farmland Ownership and Tenure in Iowa – 2007].
- Children and spouses of farmers are less likely to continue operating the farm [Source: Iowa Farm and Rural Life Poll: 2009 Summary 2].
- Eighty percent of Iowa's leases are year-to-year tenancies [Source: Survey of Iowa Leasing Practices].

- Cash rent leases, which place more risk on farmers and involve less landowner input, are replacing crop share arrangements. Cash rent and crop share leases were evenly split in 1982, but now cash rent leases account for 77 percent of rented farmland in Iowa [Source: Survey of Iowa Leasing Practices].

As farmland changes hands at an increasing rate, some new owners have little or no agricultural experience and may not live in the same county or state where the farm is located. While these landowners won't be farming the land themselves, they may well have concerns about the land and how it is farmed.

The resources at **SustainableFarmLease.org** can assist these landowners in gaining the knowledge and confidence needed to sit down with their tenant farmers and discuss how they can work together to have a productive and profitable farm operation and ensure the long-term stewardship of the land.

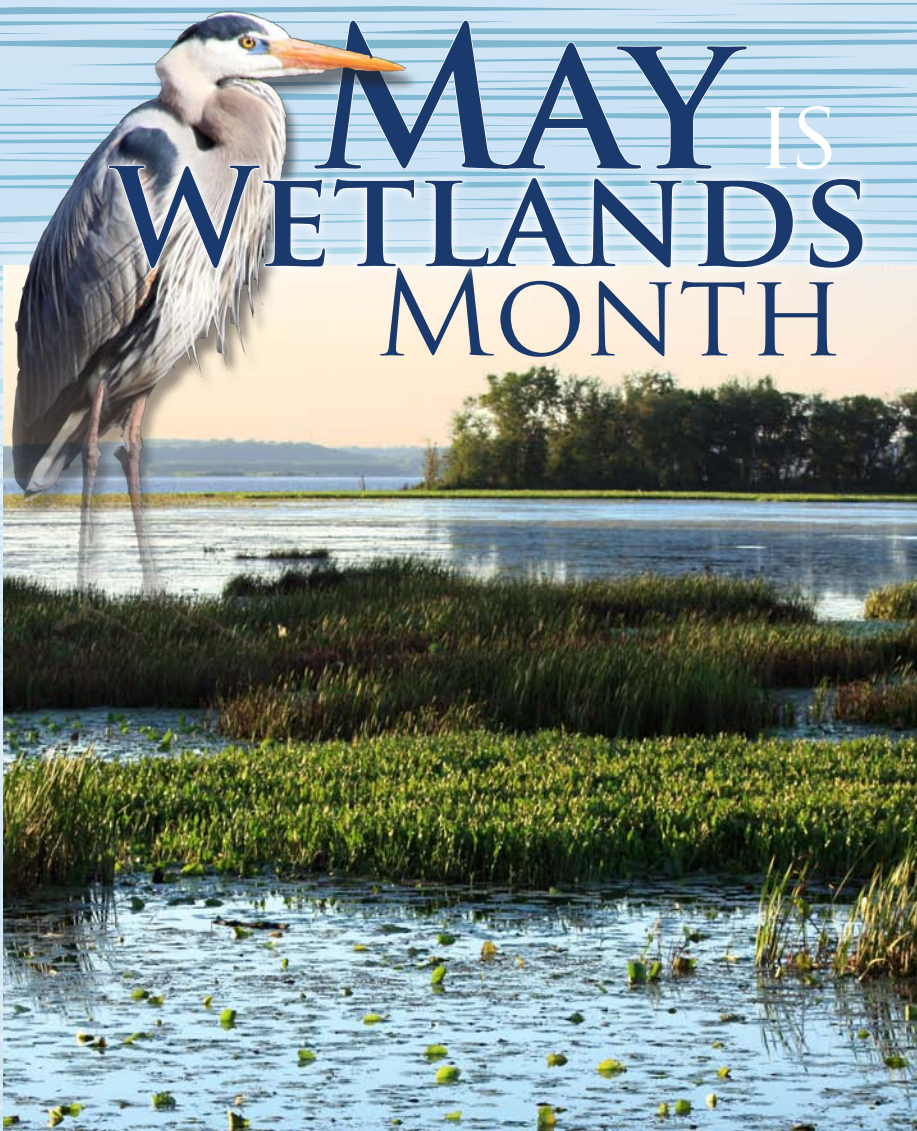
SustainableFarmLease.org provides a base of knowledge regarding farm lease provisions and the effects of farm lease arrangements on the activities of tenants. This fosters flexible negotiations and a cooperative relationship, based on landowner and tenant characteristics and concerns. The manner in which the information is presented on the website also addresses the increasing diversity of landowners. Traditional printable guides and quick reference materials are available, as well as interactive resources and multimedia platforms.

NRCS Golf Tournament

- **August 26**
- **Spring Valley GC
Livermore, IA**
- **2-person best shot**

More details coming soon. Contact Brian Tumey at brian.tumey@ia.usda.gov if you have questions.





—WETLANDS—

reduce soil erosion • prevent flooding • protect wildlife habitat
preserve biological diversity • save money on damaged crops
recharge groundwater • filter sediment, ag chemicals and nutrients

ASK US ABOUT THE
WETLANDS RESERVE PROGRAM (WRP)

WWW.IA.NRCS.USDA.GOV/PROGRAMS/WRP.HTML



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Promoting Wetlands: NRCS Launches New Campaign

This May marks the 20th Anniversary of National Wetlands Month. (<http://www.epa.gov/owow/keep/wetlands/awm/index.htm>)

In honor of this anniversary and to help NRCS promote wetlands and WRP, NRCS designed this poster in English and in Spanish. It is available as a PDF from the Iowa NRCS Sharepoint site.

Other wetland materials promoting WRP, including a postcard and tri-fold brochure, will be sent to each office.

Additional outreach activities are planned including radio interviews with Rich Sims and a possible article in the Des Moines Register highlighting the "Top Ten" public wetland complexes in Iowa.

Changes In: NRCS Personnel

Name	Official Title	Grade	Nature of Action	Effective Date	Location
ADDY, SHARI ANN	Soil Conservationist	07	CONVERT TO CAREER COND APPT	3/1/11	HARLAN
ALBERS, MEREDITH ANNA	Soil Scientist	09	CONVERT TO CAREER COND APPT	3/1/11	FAIRFIELD SOIL SURVEY OFFICE
ALLGOOD, STEPHANIE J	Civil Engineer	09	CONVERT TO CAREER COND APPT	3/1/11	OTTUMWA ENG OFFICE
ANSEL, JEREMY MICHAEL	Soil Conservation Technician	05	CONVERT TO CAREER COND APPT	3/1/11	TOLEDO
ASCHE, ADAM D	Soil Conservationist	07	CONVERT TO CAREER COND APPT	3/1/11	ELKADER
BAXTER, NICHOLE SHEREE	Soil Conservationist	07	CONVERT TO CAREER COND APPT	3/1/11	GREENFIELD
BOERSMA, JUSTIN JAY	Soil Conservationist	07	CONVERT TO CAREER COND APPT	3/1/11	ANAMOSA
BOYLAND, ERIKA V	Soil Conservationist	09	CONVERT TO CAREER COND APPT	3/1/11	OSKALOOSA
BRADLEY, KINDRA DAWN	Soil Conservation Technician	06	CONVERT TO CAREER COND APPT	3/1/11	BURLINGTON
BUCKLIN, JOHN M	Soil Conservationist	07	CONVERT TO CAREER COND APPT	3/1/11	ATLANTIC FO
COREY, PATRICK W	Soil Conservationist	09	REASSIGNMENT	2/27/11	DENISON
CRESPO-SOTO, ARNELIS	Soil Conservationist	07	CONVERT TO CAREER COND APPT	3/1/11	FORT DODGE FO
DELPEDANG, MARK ALAN	Soil Conservation Technician	07	CONVERT TO CAREER COND APPT	3/1/11	WAPELLO
FENDERSON, KRISTEN ELAINE	Soil Conservationist	07	CONVERT TO CAREER COND APPT	3/1/11	WAPELLO
FORNEY, LUCAS COLE	Soil Conservation Technician	07	CONVERT TO CAREER COND APPT	3/1/11	MALVERN
GIOMBI, HOLLY CLAIRE	Soil Conservationist	07	CONVERT TO CAREER COND APPT	3/1/11	LEON
GROTH , JACOB C	Soil Conservationist	09	CONVERT TO CAREER APPT	3/1/11	WAUKON
GROTH, JACOB C	Soil Conservationist	09	PROMOTION	2/27/11	WAUKON
HEMPY, CRAIG G	Resource Conservationist	11	RETIREMENT	3/31/11	NEVADA
HERBERT,SPENCER JARED	Soil Conservationist	07	CONVERT TO CAREER COND APPT	3/1/11	Area 1 FO STORM LAKE
JAEHLING,VALERIE MARIE	Soil Conservationist	07	CONVERT TO CAREER COND APPT	3/1/11	Area 4 SSO ATLANTIC

Name	Official Title	Grade	Nature of Action	Effective Date	Location
JONES, FRANK NATHANIEL	Soil Conservationist	07	CONVERT TO CAREER COND APPT	3/1/11	MANCHESTER
LOHAFFER, ANDREA MARGARET	Soil Conservationist	07	CONVERT TO CAREER COND APPT	3/1/11	SERGEANT BLUFF
MACK, DAVID THOMAS	Soil Conservationist	05	CONVERT TO CAREER COND APPT	3/1/11	MAQUOKETA
MATTHIAS, JEFFREY W	Soil Conservationist	11	REASSIGNMENT	3/27/11	KNOXVILLE
MCREYNOLDS, MELINDA JANE	Soil Conservation Technician	07	RETIREMENT	3/11/11	MARSHALLTOWN
MENSING, TONY JOE	Agricultural Engineer	09	CONVERT TO CAREER COND APPT	3/1/11	SIOUX CITY
MILLIREN, JULIA JEANNE	Soil Conservationist	07	CONVERT TO CAREER COND APPT	3/1/11	CHARLES CITY
MOHN, DANIEL THOMAS	Soil Conservation Technician	05	CONVERT TO CAREER COND APPT	3/1/11	DECORAH
OFFERMAN, QUENTEN ALAN	Engineering Technician (Civil)	06	CONVERT TO CAREER COND APPT	3/1/11	WILLIAMSBURG
PEEK, JODY K	Soil Conservationist	07	CONVERT TO CAREER COND APPT	3/1/11	WILLIAMSBURG
PEEK, JODY K	Soil Conservationist	07	REASSIGNMENT	2/27/11	WILLIAMSBURG
SCHLADER, STACY L	Resource Conservationist	11	PROMOTION	3/13/11	ALBIA
SCOTT, CRAIG C	Engineering Technician (Civil)	08	DEATH	3/16/11	OTTUMWA
SEAGO, JEFFREY ROBERT	Soil Conservationist	07	CONVERT TO CAREER COND APPT	3/1/11	WINTERSET
SPIRE, SETH JOSEPH	Soil Conservationist	07	CONVERT TO CAREER COND APPT	3/1/11	DONNELSON
STEELE, JASON E	MLRA Soil Survey Leader	12	PROMOTION	3/27/11	FAIRFIELD SOIL SURVEY OFFICE
STRASKOWSKI, JAMES G	Soil Conservation Technician	06	CAREER COND APPT	2/27/11	FORT DODGE FO
TAPPAN, JAMES ROBERT	Soil Conservationist	07	CONVERT TO CAREER COND APPT	3/1/11	DECORAH
WORDLAW, RANDALL VON	Soil Conservationist	07	CONVERT TO CAREER COND APPT	3/1/11	RED OAK
ZIMEK, LEIAH DANIELLE	Soil Conservation Technician	05	CONVERT TO CAREER COND APPT	3/1/11	IOWA CITY